

# The Motivational Factors for Reading in Terms of Students

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## Abstract

Issues related to reading skill can be handled both cognitively and affectively. In this study, the reading issue was handled affectively. In this sense, the city center of Burdur became the population of the study. By inclining towards the sample, composed of randomly selected primary and high school students, it was aimed to determine the factors playing role on the motivation for reading in the eyes of students. To do this, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher. Obtained data were analyzed by the SPSS statistical software. According to the findings, such factors as teachers, family members, friends, books, environment and activities had a diagnostic effect on students in terms of awakening their willingness to read. Another finding is that such factors were mostly effective on primary schools students while less effective on high school students. In terms of gender, factors except for activities and books became more effective on girls than boys. Hence, to lead students to read, books should be given to students as presents by their teacher and parents, they should be good models for them, children should be relied on and given autonomy if they are provided with books catching their interests and to be supported in the process of choosing the right friends.

## Key Words

Reading, Reading Problems, Reading Motivation.

Reading process, in a sense, is to recognize sound, syllable, words, to convert it into sound and it is reporting process in a systematic form, in a gradual structure that textual components require one another such as sentence, word, syllable, and sound. In another sense, reading process is a reader's extrapolation process about sentences and words in the text by activating his background knowledge at a higher level in the direction of instructions of the text (see Alderson, 2000; Treiman, 2003). The findings regarding students' and teachers' adequacy and habit regarding that process present a negative profile (Arslan, Çelik, & Çelik, 2009; Çiftçi, 2007; Karatay, 2007; Keleş, 2006; Kurulgan, & Çekerol, 2008; Oğuz, Yıldız, & Hayırsever, 2009; Saraçoğlu, Bozkurt, & Serin, 2003; Topçu, 2007; Yılmaz, 1989). That negative profile by definition

of reading performance could be concerned with both cognitive and affective features (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2005). Although students as Applegate and Applegate (2004) stated on the ground of many research results, they are proficient as cognitive, they are reluctant to reading. That is to say, they do not prefer reading. In other words, as Lau (2004) stated, many useful strategies with the purpose of improving student's reading skills could be taught to students. However, students will want to benefit from those strategies only if they are motivated for reading. Sever (1990) describes this situation as the second dimension of reading problem. Because of that, by taking that authenticity as a starting point, in this research the motivation is regarded as the affective aspect of reading and specific reading motivation will be dwelt on.

Motivation is defined as an inner ability, a stimulus that pushes a person to take action to achieve a goal (Duy, 2007; Fidan, 1985). Motivation, which is by definition tripwire, multifaceted, and prompt in using mind and language, is a fact that changes depending on time (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

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Nowadays, the theoreticians concerned with motive state that peoples' beliefs in proficiency to be successful, their inner and outer motives, their goals, and social contamination play an important role in identifying how many and how much activity they will do (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Wigfield & Guthrie conceptualized the reading motive in first language in a form that is made up of three main categories and eleven subordinate components that match with the factors which are determiners in providing motives (Mori, 2002).

Motivation has very important role in reading process. Many teachers state lack of motivation as the origin of the problems they face with in the learning environment (see Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). However, teachers define lack of reading motivation as the fundamental problem that they face with regarding mere reading concern (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). It is known that reading motivation contributes to students' comprehension what they read and their reaching success at school. Nevertheless, reading motive has a determining effect on students concerning how much they will read (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Schraw, Flowerday, & Reisetter, 1998; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Those judgments/views are reference to the relation between reading motive and reading performance. In literature, many research results that have been carried out with the aim of searching the relation between reading motive and reading performance from primary school third class to further levels confirm that there is a relation between reading motive and reading performance.

In similar research Gottfried (1985) points out the relation between students' academic achievement and intrinsic motives. Wang and Guthrie (2004), by discovering that students' intrinsic motives predict their reading achievements, have reached a finding supporting the finding of Gottfried. Besides those studies discovering the relation between common motive and achievement, Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala and Cox (1999) point out the relation between students' reading motive and reading achievement in their research carried out on third and fifth class level students. According to the research results carried on further grade level students such as fifth and sixth grades (Baker & Wigfield, 1999), seventh and eighth grades (Gottfried, 1985; Lehrer & Hieronymus, 1977), there are a significant relation between reading motive and reading achievement.

As these researches point out, reading motive not only predict students' reading achievements but

also relevant research results indicate that it also predicts how much students will read and how much time they will spare. In other words, there is a relation between reading amount and reading motive (Lau, 2009; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Motive/reading motive and achievement/reading relation centered research results point out that it is necessary to increase their reading motives to make them spare more time for reading and to make them become a more competent reader. In this context, the matter of how students' reading motive can be increased becomes a highly important question. In literature, (see Guthrie et al., 2006) some researches take place which constitute a reference to the possibility to realize some activities to increase students' reading motives. As the researches indicate, in learning environments, an effort should be made to increase students' reading motives by benefiting from those kinds of activities. However, to carry out these activities efficiently, it is necessary to determine what to motivate students to read with their own viewpoint, that is to say, students' opinions should be taken.

Some studies investigate the factors motivating students to read the views of them (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Law, 2008). A study that might be linked with this study was conducted by Yilmaz (2004) in the literature of Turkish education. Yilmaz gathered data to evaluate the behaviors of parents from 344 fifth-grade students by the instrument of questionnaire in his study. Another similar study was conducted by Argan and Kurulgan (2008). In this study, the effect of the formal features of the books on reading attitude was investigated by collecting data from 353 university students via a questionnaire. However, these studies are not directly related to reading motivation. It is essential to gather data about students' views on factors directly affecting the reading motivation which motivates students for reading at different levels and by making a comparative analysis. In this sense, there is gap in the literature of Turkish education, which catches our attention.

Therefore, this study uses *to be able to increase students' reading motives what can motivate them should be determined with their own views* hypothesis as a source. By taking this hypothesis as a start point, the borders of this research will be limited with the following research questions.

1. What kind of profile do the views of students have concerning the motivational factors for reading in the context of lower dimensions?

2. Do the views of students, concerning the motivational factors for reading, show a significant difference in the context of lower dimension in terms of school and gender variables?

### Method

#### Participant Group

This study was carried out in 6 schools, four of which are primary schools and two of which are secondary schools and they have been chosen as sample from the population covering the schools in Burdur city center. The sample of students forming participant group includes 900 students who were chosen from the population that includes 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade students of secondary school, 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade students from the second level, and 4-5<sup>th</sup> grade students from the first level of primary schools. However, when the questionnaire that students filled in was examined, it was found out that only 782 questionnaires were valid. The distribution of 782 students composing the sample group, in terms of gender was that 410 girls and 372 boys; in terms of school levels there were 294 primary school first level, 303 primary school second level, and 185 high school. The sampling procedure of schools and participants from the population were performed by benefiting from *simple random sampling* method owing to its high ability (see Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2008) to represent the population.

#### Development of Data Collection Instrument

First, in the study of developing data collection instrument we got benefit from the literature with the aim of determining the motivational factors for reading (see Corcoran & Mamalikis, 2009; Gambrel, 1996; Guthrie, et al., 2006; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McKool, 2007; Oldfather, 1993). Second, in the process of developing the questionnaire besides the determined factors, students were questioned regarding motivational factors. Within this process, 120 students at 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school were addressed "What arouses interest in you?" and students were asked to give their answers in written format. Written answers were analyzed as contextually. So, with theoretical information and information acquired from the analysis of student texts, content of the questionnaire was made clear in the form of scheme as six sub-dimensions which are *teacher, family, friend, book, environment, and activity* and as 50 items concerning these dimen-

sions.

After having made questionnaire items clear, three experts, two of whom are experts in the field of Psychological Counselling and Guidance (PCG) and one of whom is an expert in the field of assessment and evaluation, were presented with the scheme to take their views for validity of the study. The experts were requested to evaluate each item according to 1-5 score interval in terms of the quality to increase reading motivation, and also they were requested to make proposals if they had. In consequence of evaluation of experts, 36 items which were scored as 4-5 were taken in the questionnaire. After these procedures, the questionnaire was presented to three teachers, one of whom is competent in the field of classroom teaching, the next one is competent in the field of Turkish and the last one is competent in the field of Literature to evaluate if the items were appropriate for the students in terms of linguistics. In the direction of their suggestions, questionnaire was reviewed. In the last step of developing data collection instrument, the developed instrument was observed in terms of applicability, reliability, and time by administering it to two classes in the level of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. As a result of this observation, it was observed that the instrument was applicable and 15 minutes time was enough to complete it. After the application, alfa inner coherence index was calculated for the reliability the instrument. Alfa index was calculated as .88 for the first sub-dimension, .89 for the second sub-dimension, .89 for the third sub-dimension, .73 for the forth sub-dimension, .82 for the fifth sub-dimension, .89 for the sixth sub-dimension and .96 for the overall. As a result of applied analysis concerning the discriminating feature of the items in data collection instrument, it was seen that item-total correlation concerning 36 items changed between .303-.731. It was observed that item-total correlation changed between .573-.733 for the items of the first sub-dimension, .562-.753 for the second sub-dimension, .628-.737 for the third sub-dimension, .289-.598 for the forth sub-dimension, .613-.705 for the fifth sub-dimension, and .689-.790 for the sixth sub-dimension.

### Results

According to the findings, such factors as teachers, family members, friends, books, environment, and activities had a diagnostic effect on students in terms of awakening their willingness to read. When these factors were analyzed, what draws attention is that scores concerning these factors make dif-

ferentiation in context of school and gender. This differentiation clearly appears in arithmetic mean.

The values that were acquired from MANOVA test [Wilks Lambda( $\wedge$ )=.629 F(12,1548)=33.66,  $p<.01$ ] which was performed to examine that if the scores concerning sub-dimensions in context of school in which primary school first grade (PS1) and primary school second grade (PS2) involved implied the significant difference. This situation indicates that scores having been acquired from teacher, family, friend, book, environment, and activity dimensions changes in context of PS1 and PS2. One-way ANOVA results were analyzed to determine with which school levels that variation was related. Accordingly, numerical values were acquired as [F(2) =185.26,  $p<.01$ ] for teacher sub-dimension, [F(2) =155.52,  $p<.01$ ] for family sub-dimension, [F(2) =107.30,  $p<.01$ ] for friend sub-dimension, [F(2) =94.94,  $p<.01$ ] for book sub-dimension, [F(2) =69.25,  $p<.01$ ] for environment sub-dimension, [F(2) =94.18,  $p<.01$ ] for activity sub-dimension. Those numerical values imply that scores having been acquired from sub-dimensions make a significant difference according to PS1, PS2, and high school variables. Moreover, by analyzing Scheffe test results, which were applied to determine between in which school levels there was differentiation, it was discovered that there is a significant difference at all sub-dimensions for PS1 students over PS2 and high school students, and for PS2 students over high school students at the level of  $p<.01$ . These findings infer that teacher, family, friend, book, environment, and activities are effective more on PS1 students than PS2 students and the least on high school students to motivate the students to read.

### Discussion

With regard to the seven factors which are included in teacher's sub-dimension, primary school pupils (grade 4-5, PS1) with an average of 4.36 and those in the grade 6-8 (PS2) with an average of 3.52 stated that factors related to the teacher would motivate them to read. Furrer and Skinner (2003) found out that from 5<sup>th</sup> year through 6<sup>th</sup> year, pupils' loyalty to the teacher tends to decrease. It appears that in parallel with this decrease in loyalty, it is normal to observe a decrease in their perception of seeing teacher as a source of motivation. However, giving books to the pupils of PS1 and PS2 as a gift and teacher's introducing some books to the pupils are quite effective sources of motivation. This finding overlaps with the finding of the research by Bağcı

and Temizkan (2006). Bağcı and Temizkan reached a finding in their study in which they researched the expectation of the PS2 pupils from their teacher that the pupils in the sample group waited their teacher's introducing new books to them. For the high school pupils teacher's role as a source of motivation declines to the level of 2.88 which is the equivalent of "quite agree". Although pupils state that teacher's role to motivate pupils to read becomes less from primary school through high school, it is quite clear that teachers have a very important role in motivation to read. In his study, Law (2008) also emphasized the importance of teachers in motivating pupils to read and drew a conclusion which supports the outcome of this study.

Children need the attention and support of their parents (Baker, 2003). The pupils in 1<sup>st</sup> class, whose need is met and who feel close to their parents, fulfill their responsibilities at school. The pupils who feel close to their parents during the years of adolescence state that they are both motivated and devoted to school (Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2005). When we concern this with regard to reading motivation, a similar situation is seen. According to Çelenk's study (2003), pupils who get help from their parents and who come from the families in cooperation with the school have a higher success in understanding what they read.

In the sub-dimension of family, PS1 pupils stated that the factors related to the family would motivate them to read at a level of "quite a lot" with an average of 4.31. Emotional quality of reading interaction is a strong determiner in terms of reading motivation (Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002). According to the outcome of the research by McKool (2007), the parents who take the responsibility by discussing the books they read and by talking about the books with their children have a remarkable effect to motivate for reading. Yet, in the study by Yılmaz (2004) it is stated that parents are insensitive in this respect and this affects the children's habit of reading and visiting library in a negative way.

The average which is related to PS2 pupils' showing their family as a source of motivation decreases to 3.72 which means "a lot". For high school students, family's role as a source of motivation lessens and declines to 2.85 level on average that means "quite agree". Even so, it's apparent that the family has a crucial role to motivate their children to read. Depending on the related studies, Klauda (2009) also stresses on the significance of the support of family in terms of reading motivation between 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> classes.

When we look into the situation concerning the seven factors involved in sub-dimension of friend, the average of PS1 pupils is 4.18 which is equal to "quite a lot". The pupils who are accepted by their peers and who can set up good relationships with them show a positive view in their school life and also have a higher academic motivation (Wigfield & Wagner, 2005). Sharing books with friends has a motivating effect (Baker, 2003). In their research on PS2 and high school students, Nelson and DeBacker (2008) found that the students who are loved and respected by their classmates and who have good friendship relations have higher motivation.

To sum up, however much the effect of teacher-family and friend circles as the sources of motivation to read decreases from PS1 to high school, as a whole, the interval of students' being affected by these factors ranges between "agree a lot" and "quite agree". Students' opinions overlap with the explanations concerning this subject in the literature (see Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Özbay, 2006, 2010).

With regard to the six factors which are involved in book sub-dimension, PS1 pupils stated that the factors related to the book would motivate them on a level of "a lot" with an average of 4.42. It seems that entertaining books and books about their interest area are important in terms of arousing desire to read among PS1 pupils. These findings overlap with the findings of the research carried by Edmunds and Bauserman (2006). Edmunds and Bauserman suggested in their research based on the interview method with 4<sup>th</sup> year students that entertaining books and the ones in their interest areas aroused desire to read. According to Sever (2003), the quality of the books which students are given in this period, when basic reading and writing skills are gained, is exceedingly important.

Argan et al. (2008) in their study on university students found that the colour and the design of the cover of the book have an effect on the reader's attitude. In our study, although its average is lower than that of the other factors (2.91 – 3.71), high school students ("quite agree") and primary school students ("agree a lot") stated that the cover had an effect on reading.

Students should be allowed to choose their books according to their interest areas, for it requires that interesting stories necessitate the less use of attention sources in terms of comprehension (Hidi, 1990; Hidi, Renninger & Krapp, 2004; McDaniel, Waddill, Finstad, & Bourg, 2000). In the study by McKool (2007), students believe that if they are allowed to choose the books they will read, many

students will be motivated to read more. Guthrie and Knowles (2008), who pointed out that children's motivation to read will increase when they are provided with interesting books, emphasize the importance of interest.

With regard to four factors included in environment sub-dimension, PS1 pupils with an average of 4.31 in the level of "agree quite a lot"; PS2 pupils with an average of 3.88 in the level of "agree a lot" and high school students with an average of 3.22 in the level of "quite agree" stated that environment would motivate them to read. With regard to five factors involved in activity sub-dimension, PS1 students with an average of 4.17 in the level of "agree quite a lot", PS2 level pupils with an average of 3.55 in the level of "agree a lot" and high school students with an average of 2.88 in the level of "quite agree" pointed out that activity would motivate them to read. PS1 and PS2 students stated that book exhibitions would direct them to read, while high school students stressed on the talk days with authors. Sağlam, Suna and Çengelci (2008), in their research on reading habit of university students, suggested that talk days with authors and organizing book exhibitions contribute to development of their reading habit.

Although students' class level rises, their interest in the school decreases. In parallel with the decrease in the interest in school, from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade year to high school students inner motivation declines (Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 2001). According to the explanations Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) made depending on the related researches, students start their school life with desire and enthusiasm. However, in time, especially in PS2 a decrease is observed in their motivation to read and learn. Wigfield and Wagner (2005), making a reference to the related research findings, relate this case to two basic factors. Firstly, as students develop in cognitive terms, they reach to a level they can understand their own performance level. Secondly, together with the change in school, students keep their distance from their previous peer groups. Piper and Piper (2009) deal with the subject in terms of family and book factors. According to their research, PS1 students stated that their families provide them with books. High school students, however, expressed that their families give them money instead of books, but they spend this money for other needs such as food, cinema, etc. except books.

Upon reviewing the related literature, it is seen that the reading ability has not been on the desired level from the primary education to the university degree (see Aslantürk & Saracaloğlu, 2010; Kaynar,



2007; Keleş, 2006; Odabaş, Odabaş, & Polat, 2008; Topçu, 2007; Yılmaz, 2009; Yılmaz, Köse, & Korkut, 2009). This case also indicates that students' reading motivation is low as well. Therefore, it is necessary to make effort in order to motivate students for reading. In this respect, these suggestions can be given to motivate students for reading based on the research results: parents and teachers should give books as gifts to their students/children in order to foster them to read books, they should be model readers for them and rely on them, they should be supported in the choice of their friends by taking the importance of right-friend- choice into account. Moreover, campaigns for reading books should be organized at schools and by sparing time to their children parents should participate in book-related activities.

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